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                             in Czechoslovakia

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SOURCE A

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SOURCE B

1. No one type of signal operation is in use in the Czechoslovakian Railway (CSD). Most main lines have fully automatic signal equipment, but there is also some hand-operated block signal equipment in operation on some stretches of main line as well as on secondary lines. Branch lines usually have hand operated signals.
2. Before World War II Czech signal equipment was the best in eastern Europe, and better than most of that in use on the German railways, because it was newer. Almost all of it was first quality equipment, built in domestic Czech plants between World War I and II. However much of this equipment was destroyed in World War II, and the lack of it imposed serious restrictions on railway traffic capacity. This difficulty has been largely solved on most of the major lines, chiefly by the "vandalism" (dismantling or cannibalising) of equipment on secondary lines, particularly lines that served little Soviet-interest traffic. Thus, the system is able to cope with present loads of traffic, but shortage of signal equipment remains a serious limitation on any great increase in traffic levels. For example, only half the signal equipment has been restored in the rail yards at the major junction of Chab. Inbound traffic has complete signal service, but out-bound traffic is controlled manually. Switches must be opened by switchmen on foot at the point, who communicate with the switch tower by hand signals, and occasionally by messenger. Although this is an inefficient system of operation, the Chab station is able nevertheless to handle more than 200 trains per day.

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3. Czech industry is capable of producing all the signal equipment the CSD can forcibly require, only time and priorities for materials are needed. I have no knowledge of USSR signal equipment or operating procedures. I do not believe that the CSD signal system will be converted to the USSR system, either in types of equipment or methods of operation. One reason for this opinion is the basic difference in double-track operation: the CSD trains run on the left hand track, and in the USSR trains run on the right hand track. To convert to any USSR signal system, the entire signal system would have to be re-installed on all double-track lines in Czechoslovakia. Further there is no need for conversion; when the Soviets came into Czechoslovakia they assigned a Soviet train-dispatcher (Fahrdienstleiter) to each Czech dispatcher, whose duty was to observe the Czech until he understood the system well enough to control it.

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